

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

March 16, 1967

*12 Oxford Street
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*

VIA AIR MAIL

Dr. Francis H. C. Crick
Medical Research Council
Laboratory of Molecular Biology
University Postgraduate Medical School
Hills Road
Cambridge, England

Dear Francis:

My lapse in replying to your letter of last December should not be interpreted as lack of attention. Indeed the "Honest Jim" affair seems to have become a permanent feature of the conversational landscape around here. Even so, the main course does seem to have become clear.

My own support of publishing the book only jelled when it became apparent last July in Spetsai that you had no serious objection, displaying as you did then a rather detached, patient and bemused attitude. When later this changed so completely I had to rethink my own position. In my own balance sheet I had to set a number of items against your and Maurice's belated contrary stand and the view held by a very small minority that either this was not a useful exhibition of the scientific method or that Jim himself (not you) came out badly on careful reading.

On the other side were the following points:

1) Because of your failure to object at once, the draft manuscript had been sufficiently disseminated that it was no longer possible to keep it permanently suppressed.

2) The very great majority of the quite adequate sample who had read it by late fall were enthusiastic and

certainly felt it should be published.

3) As a consequence a successful suppression sparked by your and Maurice's objections would surely react against you in time.

4) And if publication were suppressed there is no doubt that clandestine copies of a draft that was unresponsive to the points about which you felt most strongly would surely circulate and multiply via Xerox for the rest of this century at least.

5) Finally, I felt that the writing of scientific memoirs is destined to become a natural part of the bibliographic scene simply because science has come to lie so completely in the public realm from where it derives its support. And as so many persons have already found out their only recourse is to publish their own accounts.

In this situation I felt my only contribution could be to urge excision of the more abrasive parts and a slowing of the pace toward publication so that the emotional heat might dissipate and you would have time to prepare or encourage others to prepare a different version.

I know you will not think this position sympathetic. But, nevertheless, I do feel that it is. I can understand your feeling of your privacy being invaded and nuances of being biased. The whole affair has its tragic overtones, simply because there is no way out that will not involve personal hurt. However, given things as they are, I do believe that your hurt will be less by not objecting further to the publication of a maximally revised draft.

I hope to be in Cambridge for the weekend of April 2 and hope I can see you then.

Sincerely,



Paul Doty

PD/jw

cc: M.H.F.Wilkins